

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



The Historic Homeowner Grant Program
Summer 2007—Pilot Program

A new District of Columbia government program to financially assist homeowners with the preservation of their historic property

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What is the Historic Homeowners Grant Program (HIHO)?...The program is a new financial incentive to help qualified homeowners pay for house repairs that restore historic architecture. The HIHO grants were approved by the Council of the District of Columbia and the Mayor in 2006. This is the first time ever that cash grants for historic preservation have been offered by the District of Columbia directly to homeowners.

What is the application process?...There are two parts to the application. Part I is very short and will help homeowners determine quickly if they are eligible for the grant (If in doubt about eligibility, submit the Part I application to HPO and they will review your eligibility for you). Part I will also enable homeowners to tell HPO what they would like to use the grant for. With that, HPO staff will provide comments back to the homeowner about the strengths and weaknesses of their application. The homeowner will use these comments to prepare the Part II application. The Part II application is bigger and will require more work by the homeowner. The biggest task of Part II will be securing bids from three (3) contractors for the preservation work.

How much are grants worth?...The maximum grant allowable is \$35,000 in Anacostia. A household may only submit one application per grant cycle.

Who is eligible for the grant?...For this round of funding (summer 2007) you must live in the Anacostia Historic District, and your house must “contribute to the character” of the historic district. An example of a house that wouldn’t qualify is one built in 1987. A house of that young age would not be old enough to contribute to the character of a historic district.

Are condominiums and co-ops eligible for the grant?...No. Only individual, owner-occupied households are eligible to apply for the grant. If an individual condominium owner can show that they, rather than the condominium, own a particular building part, then the homeowner may apply. Windows are an example of something that might fall under a homeowner’s ownership.

Is there an income limit for the grant?...Yes. The grant is meant for low- and moderate-income households, and if your income is too high you will not be eligible for a grant. Taken into consideration is the number of people in your household and your total Adjusted Gross Income from all sources: salary, rental income, business income, alimony Social Security, etc. Applicants should use information from their most recent federal income tax statement when applying for the grant.

Are homeowners required to contribute some of their own money to a preservation project?...Only some homeowners will need to contribute their own money. This is called a “Match.” Applicants will be separated into three **Categories** depending on household size and income. Homeowners in the first category will not pay a *match*. Owners in the middle category will have to pay 15% of project costs to *match* the grant. Owners in the last category will have to pay 40% of project costs to *match* the grant. If a *match* is required, the homeowner’s *match* must be spent on preservation costs.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



Page 2 of 2

Does the match have to be spent on the preservation project?...Yes. If a match is required, it must go towards preservation expenses. In some cases, a homeowner might build a new addition in conjunction with his or her preservation project. But in such a case, money spent on the addition will not be considered a match to the grant.

What can the grant be used for?...The grant may be used for repair and preservation of exterior features, such as exterior walls and siding, windows, roofs, cornices, porches, steps, fences, masonry. Work can be on the front, back or sides as long as it's exterior work. It could even include the restoration of missing historic features like a porch that was once on a house but is now no longer there. The grant can be used to make structural repairs like rebuilding a sagging or collapsed floor or repairing a failed foundation.

What can't the grant be used for?...A few of the examples of what the grant cannot be used for are energy efficiency, heating systems, air conditioning, plumbing, or additions. If you are unsure, submit a Part I application to HPO and they will make a determination.

Can the grant go towards projects already started or finished?...No. The grant is not retroactive. Work that has already started is not eligible for the grant.

What will be required in the Part II application?...In the Part II application homeowners will authorize release of financial income and tax records of every household income-earner to HPO so that income can be verified. Also included will be: three bids from contractors, project details like architectural drawings or purchase orders, a detailed project budget, proof of financial capacity to cover any required matching amounts.

How will grants be awarded?...A special Award Committee of DC officials and private historic preservation experts will convene to review all submitted Part II applications. The criteria used by the Award Committee shall include, in part, completeness of application, financial need of applicant, importance of property to the historic district, urgency of preservation needs of the property, consistency with the purposes of the Preservation Act, potential secondary impact of project on near-by properties, relevance to adopted DC planning goals and priorities, and equitable geographic distribution.

Are there any obligations for the homeowner to receive the grant?...Yes, the homeowner will enter into a covenant with the District of Columbia that requires that anything built with the grant remain in place and in good repair for at least 5 years. If an owner reverses or removes a project, the District of Columbia can take back the grant money by placing a lien on the property.

Application deadlines:

July 9.....Applicant must submit Part I application to HPO by 5:00 P.M.

July 13.....HPO mails Part I, with comments and blank Part II application, back to applicants

August 27.....Applicant must submit Part II application to HPO by 5:00 P.M.

September 27.....Grant awards announced.

For assistance with the application:

Call HPO at 202-442-8818 or email Brendan.meyer@dc.gov